

The Register

A Newsletter of the Appalachian Trail

Vol. 7, No. 7 July 1984

Konnarock Work Weekend



Volunteers from southern Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee A.T. maintaining clubs turned out in May to ready the Konnarock Work and Training Center for its second season as headquarters for the Konnarock Trail crew. Above, Carolyn Rhymer and Cornelius Booth (Mt. Rogers A.T. Club) and Margaret Drummond (GATC) paint the back porch. Left, Clay Birkett (VTOC) helps with renovations. For information on joining the Konnarock project, contact Rima Farmer at ATC.

Three Clubs Share Privy Project Pride

Last October we dug the hole. Below the surface soil and roots we encountered clay imbedded with rocks, so the digging took two days. The hillside slope meant that the downhill side of the hole would be one foot shorter than the other. It would be a big hole because the idea was to place two pits side by side, one for future use. On our second day of digging we were visited by a hiking tourist, Larry Van Meter, ATC's executive director taking a vacation hike!

The original plan was to make the foundation of cinderblocks which would then serve to outline and divide the excavation. When the clay proved to be so firm, however, it was suggested by Ted Sanderson that we simply put a wood divider in the middle to be

held firm by posts set at the center of each side of the seven-foot long pit.

After the winter snows and rains we found surface soil had drifted into the excavation and there was some caving in around the edges. It seemed best at this point to shore up the uphill wall and the ends with rocks instead of cinderblocks. Actually, one reason for not using cinderblocks had been that this would require cement footings under them, with the labor of mixing mortar as well.

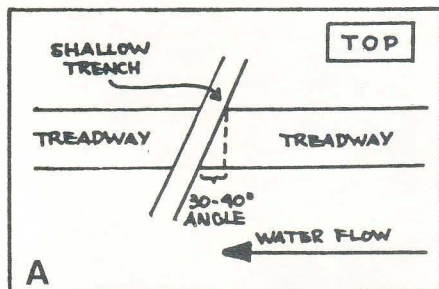
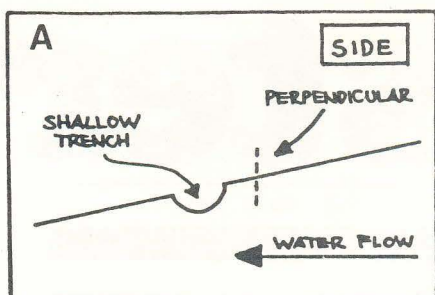
Above the rockwork walls of the pit a rectangular, bolted frame of locust logs about five feet long supports the privy itself, which is fastened to the frame by lag screws. The structure is made of 3/4-inch outdoor plywood, assembled in eight pieces, covered with

green stain, and fastened together with hex-headed lag screws. It was thought that stain would last longer than paint.

The roofpiece is a sheet of corrugated translucent fiber glass, which may or may not survive very long. Since it does not overhang appreciably, it may prove somewhat resistant to vandalism.

Inside there is a duct from one corner of the seat platform to just under the roof, serving as a vent. There is also a lettered message: "NOT FOR TRASH--Pack Trash Out."

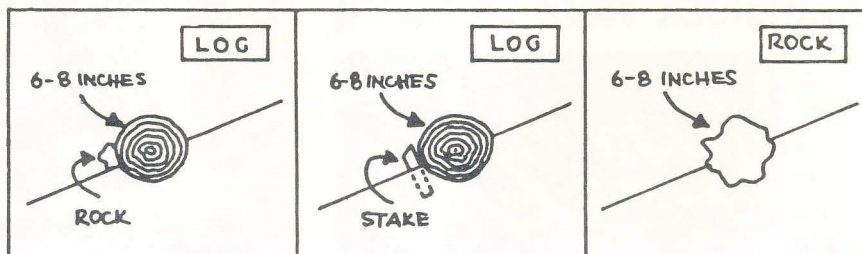
All wood used at or below ground level (including the plank platform that covers the extra hole) has been pre-treated. Also, all of the wood was covered with a coat of (Continued on page 5)



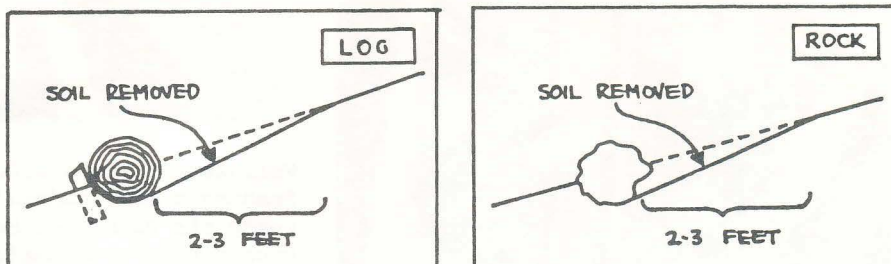
Waterbar Construction

Reprinted from the March, 1984, "Trailetter," published by PATC, edited by Jim Douglas. Drawings by Dave Seifert.

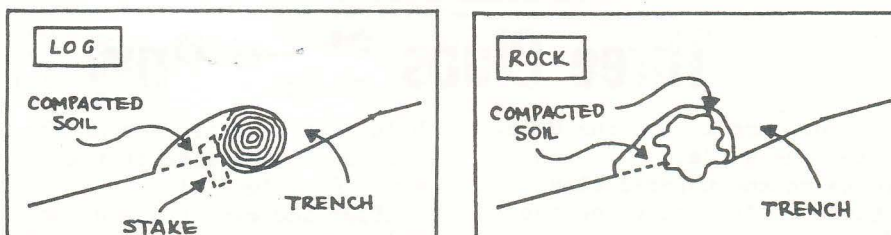
(A) Dig a shallow trench that extends past both sides of the treadway. The trench should be a 30-40° angle from the perpendicular of the trail, and it should point downhill.



(B) Place a 6-8 inch log, or 6-8 inch rocks, in the trench. Secure the log on the downhill side with wooden stakes or small rocks.

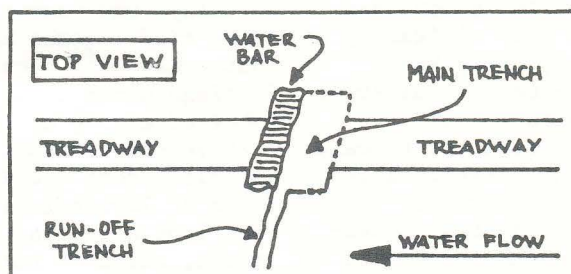


(C) Dig a gradually deepening trench that ends right against the log or rocks, starting 2-3 feet above the bar. The lowest point of the trench (just above the bar) should be lower than the level of the undisturbed treadway just below the bar.



(D1) Log: Place dirt on the downhill side of the log and compact well. Leave the uphill face of the log uncovered.

(D2) Rocks: Cover the rocks with dirt and small stones to create a mound. Compact the material well. Be sure that no parts of the rocks are left uncovered.



(E) Dig or clear a trench beyond the end of the waterbar to assure that water will not flow back onto the treadway.

The Register

A newsletter for volunteers and workers of the Appalachian Trail community, published monthly by the Appalachian Trail Conference as a service to the Appalachian Trail community and the public. Subscriptions are free to volunteer A.T. maintainers, and \$5.00 per year to others. Send correspondence and articles to THE REGISTER, Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 807, Harpers Ferry, W. Va. 25425 (304-535-6331).

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Another Viewpoint

How Much Construction Is Too Much?

In the December 1983 REGISTER there was discussion about how the A.T. should be built to have minimum environmental impact. The same subject came up more recently during planning for the Konnarock work season. Generally, the issues are whether minimum impact is achieved by a lot of trail construction or a little, whether sidehill trail is preferred to ridgeline trail, and what efforts should be taken to avoid steepness. Some Trail managers seem to advocate more construction, straight trail, sidehill trail and gentle grade. I tend mostly in the opposite direction, for reasons given in this article.

1979 Board Actions

In 1979 the Board passed a resolution that the Trail should pass lightly over the land. The ATC Stewardship Manual reinforces this position by stating that the Trail should have minimum impact on its surroundings. Some Trail builders have questioned what this meant, and interpret it to mean heavy trail construction to prevent erosion. I have never had any problems in interpreting the Board resolution and the Stewardship Manual. I have always interpreted them literally. To me they have always meant the minimum amount of construction to get a satisfactory footway.

I think the Board took its position to support the view that the A.T. should not be like other trails found elsewhere, which are often much more heavily constructed and easier to traverse. Such construction is used for trails designed for horse travel and heavy foot traffic, such as are found in western park and forest lands and in city parks. The A.T. is not such a trail and never will be. The Board's position was intended to help resist the pressures to make the A.T. easier to hike and more obviously a man-made Trail.

Design for Long-Range Use

For long-range use, I think the Trail should be built with the minimum amount of work to get a satisfactory footway. To do more than this requires more heavy construction, much of which will be unnecessary work and unnecessary intrusion on the natural landscape. I say this for the following reasons:

1. The Trail need not be built for heavier use than now being experienced, because Trail usage appears to be stable, not increasing. If use does later increase, the Trail can be improved as needed.

2. The Trail will no doubt show signs of wear as the years pass by, but it is very difficult to predict which sections will wear first and which ones won't. It is costly and visually an intrusion to build a trail to anticipate all eventualities.

3. It is not valid to say, as is sometimes done, that if it is not done right the first time it won't be done. Actual experience does not confirm this. Any competent trail organization has a continual program of maintenance and construction.

Avoiding Trees

Some Trail builders have criticized undulating sidehill trail to avoid small trees. I agree that this cannot be justified if it makes the trail too steep. However, I think most readers will agree that sidehill trails can be undulated for good purpose, such as to improve drainage. Further, sidehill undulations are acceptable if they are not too steep. On flat land, there is no

(Continued on page 5)

Gypsy Moth Monitoring

On May 9, former ATC Chairman Ruth Blackburn along with ATC's Southern Trail Coordinator Rima Farmer accompanied two National Park Service biologists on part of a recently initiated NPS gypsy moth monitoring program. The group visited three sites along the A.T. where gypsy moth egg masses were counted and samples of aquatic animals were taken from springs and their runoff.

The sites were Keys Gap spring and shelter area; the spring at PATC's Blackburn Trail Center; and Sand Spring, just north of Snickers Gap. According to biologists Bill Walker and Gary Johnston of the NPS Washington office, the objectives of the field trip were:

- To compare gypsy moth egg mass numbers with estimates made by Virginia, West Virginia, and the U.S. Forest Service; and
- To determine the presence of aquatic animals potentially susceptible to impact from Dimilin, the insecticide scheduled to be used the following week as part of state gypsy moth control programs.

Egg mass counts taken that day were consistent with those reported by West Virginia and Virginia. All three spring systems were found to contain invertebrates which could potentially be affected by Dimilin. A followup visit will be made to determine the effect of the spraying on these organisms.

ATC Hours

The ATC headquarters in Harpers Ferry will now be open Saturdays and Sundays as well as weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The expanded hours, which will be in effect from May through October, are an effort to provide greater service to hikers, visitors, and those who request information by telephone.

Trailwork In Maine

With close to 300 miles of the Appalachian Trail depending on them for upkeep, the Maine A.T. Club does a truly remarkable job. A relatively small membership scattered over great distances manages each year to crowd into the brief working season there an impressive inventory of trailwork. This year is no exception.

By the time this issue of the REGISTER reaches your hands, they will have completed 14 work trips, beginning at the end of April. Two more trips remain on the schedule.

From July 22 through July 28 a crew will be clipping and clearing the White Brook Side Trail from Gulf Hags to White Cap. Next month, from August 10-25, a crew will be working on a five-mile relocation along the Piscataquis River. The availability of swimming at the end of the day will be a feature of this trip.

The Maine A.T. Club would doubtless welcome all the help it can get, so if any readers are interested in spending some time in Maine this summer assisting the two club crews mentioned above, check with Steve Clark for more information. (Steve Clark, RFD #3, Box 250, Winslow Me. 04901; 207/872-9631.)

NY/NJ Job Opening

A position as Assistant Director is open at the NY-NJ Trail Conference. Individuals should have B.A. degree. Responsibilities include office management, TRAIL WALKER newspaper editorship, volunteer development, with capability for trail field work. \$15,000 salary. Opportunity for growth in position. Send resume to: NY-NJ Trail Conference, 20 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018.

Along the Trail

Smoky Mountains Hiking Club and the Carolina Mountain Club held a joint hike on Saturday, May 5, on the Booger Man Trail near Cataloochee in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. "Booger Man" was a landowner who refused to allow his land to be logged.

On May 15, the Georgia A.T. Club held a "trailfoods workshop." Earlier this spring, on the weekend of March 17-18, they mustered 40 persons to cover 82 miles of Trail in an early season walk-through.

PATC has now completed the approximately 7.5 miles of new trail that eliminated Virginia Route 601 from the A.T. route. The club cautions against use of the many streams for drinking water, since headwaters lie on private land where cattle sometimes graze. There is a spring at Glaser Cabin.

PATC's Ed Garvey reports that an outstanding job of trailwork, involving moving of 200-pound boulders, was carried out near Mary's Rock in Shenandoah National Park by Boy Scouts from Troop 13 in Reston, Va. Half a dozen of the boys were in their mid-teens. The character and quality of the work done, according to Ed, could match that of the CCC when the Trail was originally installed, about 50 years ago.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has published a membership recruitment flier, attractively illustrated, that stresses trailwork. The publication boasts of 60 miles of new trail built in three years, and solicits both memberships and contributions.

Maine A.T. Club will operate its volunteer caretaker program at Bigelow Col on Mt. Bigelow again this year, with Phil Pepin as coordinator.

At the Pocono Environmental Education Center in Pennsylvania, a wildlife photography seminar will be conducted July 27-28 by Leonard Lee Rue. For information, contact PEEC, R.D. 1, Box 268, Dingmans Ferry, Pa. 18328; 717/828-2319.

Natural Bridge A.T. Club reports that work is progressing on the Elk Pond Mountain Shelter. Also, a Management Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway is being developed.

Mountain Club of Maryland conducted an all-night hike through Baltimore, touching upon such historic points as Edgar Allen Poe's grave. This event took place on June 16-17, and many Pennsylvania hikers participated, presumably to get "spooked."

Each year MCM sends to ATC's Trust for Appalachian Trail Lands memorial donations made in memory of deceased members.

American Youth Hostels ran its ninth annual Potomac River Valley Bicycle Rally in mid-May, from the suburbs of Washington, D.C., to Harpers Ferry, with an overnight stop at the Kiwanis Hostel on the Potomac.

Jim Preston, Superintendent of Maryland's A.T. preserve, arranged for a crew of seasonal state workers to install five gates on woods roads on South Mountain, so as to prevent vehicle access to the new Pogo Memorial Campsite near Black Rock.

The seventh National Trails Symposium was held at Russellville, Ark., May 16-June 2.

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Privy Project...

(Continued from page 1)

preservative before being assembled. The total cost of materials for the privy was less than \$500.

This kind of dual pit design presupposes that the outhouse

will be moved in perpetuity from one hole to the other. Theoretically, it is possible to excavate a previously filled pit after a year or two, when the waste has turned to soil, to prepare it for the next moving of the privy. In this instance we hope the privy

will survive at least two future movings.

The privy sections were transported to the site by a farm tractor pulling a dirtbike carrier as a trailer. This service was provided for the club by Superintendent Jim Preston of Gathland State Park, Maryland.

How Much Construction?... (Continued from page 3)

harm in winding a trail to avoid trees, and in fact it has a pleasing effect.

Sidehill Trail

I favor ridgeline trail over sidehill trail, for two reasons. The first reason is that a ridgeline trail makes less impact on the landscape. I think we must resist the pride that comes with good trail work, and make the trail blend in with the landscape, rather than stand out against it. I especially object to digging trail on grassy balds because this creates more damage than it is intended to eliminate.

The second reason I prefer ridgeline trail is that it is so much easier to build. It takes at least ten times as much work to build a dug trail, which consumes time and funds that can be used for other things. Time and funds will always be limited, whether the work is done with agency labor, volunteer work camps, or Trail maintaining clubs. Time not used for heavy construction can be used for other trail work, including such things as shelters, bridges and normal trail maintenance. Excess, unnecessary construction may discourage volunteer participation and necessitate that it be done by paid labor.

Maintenance of ridgeline trail is comparable to sidehill trail, provided that both are properly constructed. Maintenance problems come from improper construction with either type of trail.

For these reasons, I prefer ridgeline trail, and favor trail design that avoids as much sidehill trail as possible. This means scouting the terrain to find gentle slopes and ridgelines and using them as much as possible.

Grade

My preference is for the maximum grade to be determined so that the treadway will not erode, will be safe, and will not be extremely difficult. I agree with the ATC trail standards manual, which states that grades should generally be less than 15 percent, but can be much greater than this for special circumstances and short distances.

The choice of maximum grade should not be some arbitrary value, such as 8 percent, taken from standards for other kinds of trail. It should not be based on a desire to make the Trail easy for hikers. I mention these two criteria because I find them often used for A.T. design, and I believe that they are improper for the A.T. Choice of a mild grade where it is not needed leads to longer trail with switchbacks and heavy construction.

I am well aware of the argument that steep trails erode. But that argument can be used too broadly. Trails on rock will not erode no matter how steep they are. On soil, maximum acceptable grade will depend on soil characteristics. This can best be judged by the appearance of other nearby amounts of traffic. A fixed maximum grade is not called for.

Trail design criteria, like shelters, will probably always be a subject for discussion in the A.T. community. There is a diversity of views on the subject. Continued, thoughtful study can lead to a good resolution of the concerns.

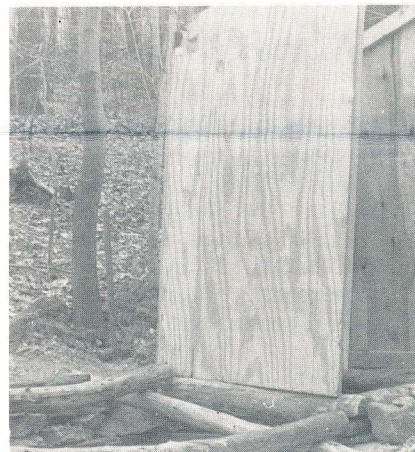
--Ray Hunt, Chairman
ATC Board of Managers

The site of this new edifice is the Pogo Memorial Primitive Backpacker Camp on South Mountain in Maryland, on a side-loop trail just north of Black Rock. It is named in memory of "Pogo" Rheinheimer, a very active 16-year-old member of the Mountain Club of Maryland, who drowned in a canoeing accident. The campsite is the location of the former rustic Blackwater Hotel, of which only the stone cribbing of its foundations remain. Early in the season there are several excellent springs at the site, and even by summer's end there is still a good one that remains flowing.

Two sets of beautifully routed signs made by PATC's sign volunteers were set up to mark the approaches to the campsite and to indicate its purposes and its restriction to backpackers.

The loop trail is maintained by the Maryland A.T. Club of Hagerstown. Potomac A.T. Club made the signs. Mountain Club of Maryland made the privy.

--Thurston Griggs



A "two-holer" privy constructed by the Mountain Club of Maryland. The dual pit design allows the structure to be moved from one hole to the other. (Photo by Thurston Griggs).

The Register

Appalachian Trail Conference
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July 1984

Along the Trail... (Continued from page 4)

Mountain Club of Maryland has opened a primitive campsite in Maryland at the site of the former Black Rock Hotel. The club also opened a new shelter at Campbell Spring, at the southern edge of Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley.

A coalition has been formed in the Cumberland Valley to support an off-road Trail route across the valley. Some of the members of the coalition (which was initiated by the Susquehanna A.T. Club) are the Audubon Society, Potomac A.T. Club, Mountain Club of Maryland, and the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy.

PATC's Trails Supervisor Jim Douglas has designated three additional assistants in Shenandoah National Park. They are Jim Edmonds, Paul Marx, and Jon Harmon, who will be joining Ed Garvey and Mickey Williams in this capacity. This year has been exceptionally bad for its erosion problems in the Park. This is water-bar year.

Carolina Mountain Club worked during the winter on relocation of Forest Service trails in Butter and Cat Gap. This included building a bridge over Grogan Creek.

Tidewater A.T. Club was involved in removal of the wreckage of a twin-engine Piper Comanche that crashed on the A.T. 1/4 mile north of the high point of Three Ridges near the Blue Ridge Parkway. The pilot was killed, and wreckage was widely strewn along the A.T.

The identity of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" (see May, 1984, REGISTER) has been revealed. He is Don Mason, a pilot for Tennessee Eastman Company of Kingsport. He airlifted an entire picnic, complete with table, linen, candles, and dinner music, to the top of 5,587 ft. Hump Mountain. There he surprised his friends of the TEHC who were conducting a relocation survey along with representatives of ATC, the Cherokee National Forest, and the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

Mark your calendars now for ATC's 1985 General Meeting in Poultney, Vt. The dates are August 3-9.

British Group Offers Experience

In our January issue we described the program in England of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Last year it completed 125,000 days of volunteer work!

This summer the Trust is running over 400 one- or two-week projects all over Britain. Activities include drystone walling (cribbing?), coppicing, sand dune fencing, trail construction, etc.

The cost is £25 per week, with food and accommodation provided. Anyone 18 or over can join these projects and really rub elbows with the British, while learning conservation skills.

A free brochure is available on "Conservation Holidays" from BTCV, 36 St. Mary's St., Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0EU.

--compiled by Thurston Griggs